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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Written statement* submitted by the Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[15 January 2002]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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PALESTINE BEFORE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In March 2001, the *Federation of Associations for the Defense and Promotion of Human Rights* presented in this forum the paper *The Palestinian Question and the United Nations* in which an appeal was made from the civil society so that the international community would put into action the mechanisms to guarantee the compliance of the United Nations Security Council and General Assembly's resolutions on Palestine and for the United Nations to be the framework in which the endorsed agreements between Palestinians and Israelis are to be implemented.

Fifty-three years have gone by since the establishment of the State of Israel and fifty-two since it was admitted in the United Nations. When it was admitted in 1949, the representative of Israel stated that the new state was peace loving and would respect all United Nations resolutions, in particular those concerning respect for human rights. We have seen for over half a century not only how Israel has shown no respect nor implemented those resolutions but how Israel has systematically violated these as well , besides endangering peace and security throughout the Middle East and the whole Mediterranean.

Since its creation, the State of Israel:

- Has mass destruction and nuclear weapons, refusing to sign the No Proliferation Treaty.
- Has used weapons forbidden by the international community against the Palestinian civil population under Israeli military occupation.
- Has attacked sovereign Mediterranean states such as Lebanon and Tunisia.
- Has systematically violated the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civil population under military occupation:

    - It has destroyed towns and villages and expelled civilians from the occupied territories, turning them into refugees with no right to return.

    - It has built illegal settlements and moved civilians from the occupying power to occupied territories.

    - It has committed war crimes such as deportations and extrajudicial assassinations of Palestinians.

    - It has locked the civil population under occupation up in what can be referred to as concentration camps that has led to the destruction of the infrastructures and the economy of the Palestinian society.

    - It has raided Palestinian populations and plundered their natural resources.

    - It has imposed collective punishments against the civil population such as massive house demolitions and destruction of farmland.

As a result of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the convening of the Madrid Conference it was expected that the United Nations would have an effective role and would put into action the mechanisms for the compliance by Israel of United Nations resolutions as well as taking forceful and strict measures with the occupying force as we have seen it do so in other areas of the world. Unfortunately, this has not taken place and as a result, the situation in the Middle East has progressively deteriorated leading to the dead end we are witnessing today.

Following the dramatic attacks against the United States on September 11 2001 and the measures taken by the international community regarding terrorism, the international political leaders, headed by President George Bush and the European Union, through Tony Blair and

José María Aznar, admitted the repressive means used by the occupation in order to achieve its political and ideological aims when they publicly stated the need to put into action the mechanisms for the establishment of the independent State of Palestine. In keeping with this statement, the *Federation* considers that the time has come for the international community to definitely take charge of their responsibility, in particular the United Nations, and restore the Palestinians' legitimate inalienable rights helping them to achieve their aspirations of freedom and independence. Governments, politicians and citizens of the world are aware that the only obstacle for peace and security in the Middle East is Israel, represented by its present Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon.

The road to peace is being long and painful and the Palestinian civil population has been suffering the occupying power's barbarism for 53 years, being this last year one of the most dramatic. In order to assure the integrity of the Palestinian People, the United Nations has the moral and political obligation to deploy an international protection force to protect the civil population from the Israeli occupying forces aggressions.

For all the aforementioned, the *Federation of Associations for the Defence and Promotion of Human Rights* reaffirms its conviction that for the achievement of a global and lasting peace in the Middle East it is essential that:

- The United Nations puts into action the mechanisms to guarantee the compliance of the UN Security Council and General Assembly's resolutions on Palestine, in particular Security Council's resolutions 242 and 338.
- The compliance of such resolutions entails the end of the Israeli military occupation over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, as well as a just solution for the Palestinian refugees as stated in the General Assembly's resolution 194.
- The end of the military occupation implies the recognition of the Palestinian People's legitimate inalienable rights with the establishment of the independent State of Palestine.